Advice to the *Engliſh* YOUTH:

Relating to the Preſent *JUNCTURE* of *AFFAIRS.*

GENTLEMEN,

I Make my Application to *You* who are the next to come on the Stage, to act your Parts on the great Theatre of your Native Country. I Proteſt you are ſurrounded with the happieſt Circumſtances, and have the greateſt Advantages, that any Youth have had for many years; and it will be your own Fault, if you prove not the beſt *Actors* that have entred the Stage, ever ſince the *Reformation*; having ſuch Opportunities of improving your Knowledge, and ſetling your Judgments aright, by Obſervation of the many Preceding Failures, and Falſe Steps of your *Anceſtours.*

Now is the *Critical Minute*, and now is the *Acceptable Time*, both for you to hear, and me to adviſe, when both may do it without Danger: I cannot ſuppoſe you ſo ignorant, as not to know what is doing in your Nation: 'Tis a Great and Important Work; a Work of an Univerſal Concern to every Individual Perſon, of whatever Degree or Station: 'Tis a Work of the Greateſt Honour and Advantage, and I would not for any thing, but that you ſhould be concerned, and have your ſhare of both: And though all be concerned, yet you Principally; for what others do, is chiefly for you, and you are to have the greateſt ſhare of the Happineſs and Bleſſing, if it ſucceed; or of the Miſery and Diſadvantages, if not.

Men Adult, Poſſeſſed of Offices, that have Trades and Families, or otherwiſe engaged by Intereſt, prepoſſeſſed by Prejudice, and long glued to a Party, are with the greateſt Difficulty prevailed upon, by any Argument whatſoever. For though they may be *Convicted*, yet they will not be *Converted*: Their Præ-Engagements are a load upon them, which makes them very heavy and dull, and the Whip of Reaſon and Diſcourſe muſt come often o'er their Backs, before they will move: 'Tis a great piece of *Mortification* to quit an Advantage, or leave an Opinion, which for ſo long they have thought to be *True*. We indeed Addreſs our Diſcourſes and Reaſonings to them, ſuppoſing them beſt able to Judge and Underſtand them; but principally, becauſe they are upon the Premiſes, and in Poſſeſſion and Actual Adminiſtration of all Affairs. 'Tis in vain to Addreſs to them that cannot Act: and *They* are only Empowered and Qualified by Law for Action: This forces us to Treat with them, and our Love to our Countrey, to them, (and to you by Conſequence,) forces us to continue it; tho we find them never ſo awkward and untractable. 'Tis a great Drudgery indeed, to have to do with Men unhappily Inſtructed, and I think no greater Inſtance thereof, ever was, or can be given, than the preſent Oppoſition of ſuch men, to a Propoſition ſo clearly and apparently Demonſtrated, to be an *Univerſal Good.*

Theſe Conſiderations made me Appeal and Addreſs to you, not for Redreſs or Remedy: (For I know you cannot act,) but by way of Advice and Complaint: You have not as yet entred upon Buſineſs and Affairs of the World, but are fitting your ſelves for the ſame; you ſtand clearer, and have few or no Fetters on you; and ſome of you have not choſe your Side or Party, (or as ſome call it) your Religion as yet: And therefore, Advice to you I reckon the more proper; and with Submiſſion be it ſpoken, many of you may be better Judges than ſome of greater Authority and Years: For thoſe that ſtand by, often ſee more than thoſe who are concerned in the Action.

Some of you your ſelves have ſeen, others no doubt have heard or read, and I could gladly wiſh, ſome of you have not felt too, the ſad Effects of former Troubles, or later Calamities on the ſcore of Religion, in your Native Countrey; How much Blood has been ſhed? What Devaſtations, Plunderings, and Ruining Towns and Families there has been? Surely you are not fond of ſuch Miſeries, but will take him to be your real Friend, that will endeavour to ſhew you the Cauſes of them, or will in any Meaſure contribute to ſtem the Tide of Miſery, which will otherwiſe as *certainly* carry *You*, as it has done your *Fore-fathers*, down its impetuous Stream. *You* are Embarqued on the *ſame* Bottom with them, and muſt expect the *ſame* Fortune, or rather Mis-fortune, if you endeavour not to prevent it.

Then in Order thereto, you may pleaſe to obſerve, That the *Principal Motives* to all our Actions in the *Chriſtian Religion*, are Two; *viz. Rewards* and *Puniſhments*; and theſe in the higheſt Degree, both for Quality and Duration. Now, What will not men believing ſuch things do, to obtain the one, or ſhun and avoid the other? I ſay, What will they not do? Or rather, What have they not done already? They have tried all the Ways and Methods imaginable, which either Wit or Art can ſuggeſt unto them; and they neither muſt nor can be blamed herein, being about an *Affair* of the greateſt Importance in the World; *viz. Eternal Bliſs*, or *Eternal Miſery.* Now the Queſtion is, (and a fooliſh one too,) *Who ought to*

be the chief Manager, or moſt and principally concerned in the choice of the Means, to obtain the one, or avoid the other? Surely the Perſons Intereſted, and not others: But this is the Miſery of Chriſtendom, eſpecially of this Nation: Others the leaſt concerned, will needs chooſe the Means, and be impoſing their reſpective Ways and Mode's on their Brethren. They tell them, *They have found out the only True Way, and that they muſt and ſhall go in it*; and on their Refuſal, have laid unſufferable Penalties upon them. Hence come our preſent Differences and Quarrels, and they will never have an end; but will certainly end in the Deſtruction and Ruine of the Nation, if any one ſort of Men have the Liberty, or Power to diſturb others on this Account: For when Men have been diligent and careful, Peruſed the General Rule and Standard *(the Scriptures)* with Honeſty and Integrity, and uſed the beſt Endeavours to find out the beſt way, and at laſt having fixed upon one, which they really *think* the beſt; *(* whether it really is or is not, is not to the purpoſe,*)* I ſay then, for another Party of Men to come with Violence, and force them out of this way, which they really think is the only way to *Heaven*, and will free them from *Hell* and *Eternal Damnation*; What can be ſuppoſed to be the Natural Product of ſuch a ſort of Violence, but *Confuſion, Plots* and *Tumults*, and all the Oppoſition imaginable?

And indeed no wonder Men are, and have been ſo uneaſie, when they ſee themſelves thruſt out of *Paradice*, and conſigned to live for ever with the *Devil* and his *Angels*, in *Everlaſting Burnings*: No wonder they have been ſo troubleſome to the World, diſturbed the Affairs of Princes, unhinged ſo many Governments, and uſed all the Arts imaginable, both direct and indirect, to Extricate themſelves out of the Way to Hell, and to get again into the Way to Heaven, from which their Enemies have forced them.

And had we ſtudied, and made it our Buſineſs to find out a Way to involve our unhappy Countrey into all the Calamities, all the Miſery and Confuſion which it has ſo long laboured under, we could not poſſible have invented a more ſuitable *Expedient*, than to perſecute Men, and uſe Force and Violence in *Matters of Religion*.

This is the only ready way to ſet all in an Uproar; for Heaven and Hell, Eternal Bliſs and Glory, for the *Prize* on one ſide, to thoſe that win; and Eternal Miſery and Confuſion on the other, to thoſe that loſe; and this not only for themſelves, but for their Poſterity, which adds Life and Strength to their Contention: I ſay, for Men to be ſtopped in their Career, and eager Purſuit after *ſuch Things*; Good God! How muſt they needs be Exaſperated at thoſe who hinder and lett them! It ſurpaſſeth my thought to conceive; and I am ſo far from wondring at all the Calamities and Miſeries, that Men have brought on the World on this Account; that I think they have been ſlow and dull, nay very Merciful and Gentle; and do rather wonder, they have not Perpetrated more; and had it not been for the *Accidental* and *Undeſigned* Aid of ſome Unbelievers, before this time Beaſts had Inhabited Chriſtendom inſtead of Men.

Believe me, Force in the *Matters of Religion*, is the Rock which your Fore-fathers have ſplit upon; a thing no doubt, invented by the Enemy of Mankind to diſturb them, and to make their Earth a Hell, and all the Kingdoms thereof, as much as poſſible, like his own. Theſe things I would have you conſider and obſerve.

It lies not in your Power to *Act* I know, and I ſolicite not that; but it lies in your Power to conſider, to hear, to be ſober and diſcreet, yes, and to diſcourſe your Parents and Principals about the ſame; and I hope your Religion will admit of ſuch things: I would not have you miſtake me; I come not to Proſelyte you to any Side or Party of Chriſtians, nor to diſſwade you from the Religion you were bred in, to be Undutiful to your Parents, or Diſreſpectful to your Superiours. No; I know that *every Side* and Party of Chriſtians are in the right, and *none* in the wrong; I ſhall leave ſuch things to God and your own Conſciences, to whom they moſt properly belong. But I come to perſwade you, to uſe that Reaſon and Underſtanding which God Almighty has bleſſed you with; ſo as to diſtinguiſh betwixt that which will make you Happy, and that which will make you Miſerable.

Religion, *(* I mean the Chriſtian Religion*)* would make you happy, if rightly underſtood and managed; and therefore, however at preſent obſcured, I would have you always entertain High and Honourable Thoughts of Her. Her Natural Iſſue, are Love, Peace, Compliance and Charity, and whatever elſe can be called good, or can any way contribute to the making a Nation or People happy. I therefore diſcharge her from the Miſeries and Miſchiefs which infeſt us.

I alſo diſcharge *(*which ſome will wonder at*)* all the Diviſions and Sects amongſt us, from having a direct Hand herein; for they would no more affect or hurt us, than our ſeveral Counties and Corporations, were they but let alone. It muſt be confeſſed indeed, that in thoſe Nations, where only one Way and Method of Religion is practiſed, *(* whether right or wrong it matters not*)* there are more Advantages for Peace and Quietneſs, but leſs for Truth and true Holineſs: For they all thinking that particular Way, to be the true and right Way, they are eaſy and have no Regret or Remorſe on their Conſciences; They make no Oppoſition or Diſturbance, enjoying the Religion they were bred in, which to all men is always the *Right*. Theſe Men indeed, are in a fair way for Peace in *This* World; but as for Truth, if they have it, it muſt be by *Chance* and accidentally; for if what their Governours lays on them, or their Parents teach them, be wrong or falſe, they are under an invincible Neceſſity of being in the wrong too; for all Diſquiſition, all Liberty of Choice and Judgment is taken away; and what will become of them in *another World*, I will not here determine: But then in thoſe Nations

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where diverſity of Opinions, and ſeveral ways in Religion are afoot, and the Profeſſors of each think their *own* way to be the *true* and *right* way to Salvation, and no other (whether it be, or be not; whether it comes by Chance or by Choice, is not material, but their *thinking* ſo) To ſupply the defect of *One-neſs*, a general Indulgence and Liberty muſt be granted to all Parties, and this will make them all of *one* Religion (though they had but one before) and when they are all of *one* Religion, then the Natural Conſequence is Peace and Quietneſs. Our Unhappy Nation is one of theſe, and has been long perplex'd in Miſery and Troubles; and that by our Unskilfulneſs, in taking wrong Meaſures, for thinking to bring Peace by Uniting all; the Medium we have uſed in order thereunto being *Force*, has Ruined and Confounded all: So that I diſcharge both Religion and Diviſions from having a hand herein; and lay all the fault where it truly is, upon *our ſelves*. We have managed things ill; nay, we have been infinitely miſtaken, not only in our Methods of Peace, but alſo in other things. We have called our Paſſion, our Humour, our Opinion, our Fancies; nay, our very Vices, our Pride, Ambition and Avarice, and almoſt every thing, by the Venerable Name of Religion: And having embraced a Cloud inſtead of *Juno*, no wonder the Iſſue and Production have been *Strife*, *Envy*, *Hatred*, *Malice*, and all that *Black Liſt of Enormities*, which have ſo conſtantly Vexed and Perplexed us to this day.

But on further Conſideration, inſtead of blaming, methinks I begin to pity the preſent Actors in a very great meaſure, looking on their Actions as not altogether their *own*, but as an Infatuation on their Underſtandings, and a Judgment from Heaven upon them (which I hope God will now ſoon avert) for their Sins: For if any of them be asked why they formerly did, or do ſtill continue to Perpetrate ſuch Iniquities, their Anſwer is St. *Paul's*, *Verily I thought I ought to do many thing againſt that Name; againſt ſuch Men, or ſuch a Party.* This puts me upon Lamenting the Unhappineſs of our ſeveral Educations, which engage us in ſuch Mutual Severities; it alſo puts me upon looking a little more narrowly into that *Religion*, which by our Ill Managery does prey upon *Humanity*.

I conſider therefore, that we Suck not in our *Religion* with our Milk; nor is it *Natural*, but *Taught*; that if any *other Religion* but the *Chriſtian*, had been Taught us, we ſhould have defended and ſtood up as much for *that*; that 'tis our happineſs that we were Born in a *Chriſtian* Country, and not in another; and that we ſhould as certainly have been *Mahometans*, had we been Born in *Conſtantinople*, as now we are *Chriſtians*: That more ought to be Aſcribed in this matter to Chance, or rather *God's* good Providence, than to our Choice. I alſo further Obſerve, That the very ſame Reaſon which makes *Turks* hate *Chriſtians*, makes *Chriſtians* hate *Turks*, and makes the ſeveral Parties of *Chriſtians* hate one onother; and that is, our thoughts of their being *wicked*, and in the *wrong*: And ſay they, *Why do you Accuſe us? Would not you have us Hate and Perſecute Wickedneſs and Falſhood, and eagerly Purſue Goodneſs, Virtue and Truth?* Yes, ſay I, by any means: But *beſure* you be not miſtaken; have a care of calling *Virtue Vice*, and *Vice Virtue*; for not to be truly and rightly Informed, is of the moſt dangerous Conſequence in the World; for it will moſt certainly Plunge both you and others into Inevitable Ruine: What it *has* done, it will do again; it has Ruined others, and will Ruine you. This is not only the Unhappy and Miſerable Caſe of this Nation, but of all *Chriſtendom*. And no wonder indeed men are ſo hardly, and with ſo great difficulty, perſwaded to ceaſe their Mutual Severity, and to become Mild, Gentle and Peaceable, when all the while they think, and are certainly perſwaded, that they are Proſecuting Wickedneſs and Vice, purſuing Virtue, doing their Duty, performing the Actions of Religion, and offering a Sacrifice pleaſing to their Maker.

Well, it is ſo, and you are the Off-ſpring of *ſuch* a Generation, the Sons of *ſuch* Parents, Servants to *ſuch* Maſters: You are Heirs to their *Miſtakes*, as well as their *Lands*; and have Learned their Principles, as well as Trades; and will be poſſeſſed of their Conſequent Miſery, and as certainly Ruine your ſelves (if you begin not to be Wiſe) as *they* have done. You are in a manner ready Armed, like *Cadmus's Men*, *as ſoon as you are Born*; and in a Poſture, *ready to deſtroy one another.*

O Unhappy Caſe of *Engliſh*-men! But 'tis not the Nature of the *Engliſh*, the Nature of Religion or Diviſions, but 'tis our Indiſcretion, our Ill-Managery; 'tis the Unhappineſs of our Educations: And I Appeal both to you and your Inſtructors, whether ever either of you felt any Regret or Remorſe in your Conſciences, in Worſhipping God in the way you were Bred to, but rather much Complacency and Delight? Every one is pleaſed in his *own* way, and diſpleaſed with *another*; and that purely on the Score of Education; and we are Fierce, or Calm, Angry or Pleaſed with one another, not becauſe we are in the right, or have Reaſon on our ſide, but becauſe we are Prepoſſeſſed and differently Educated. And all our habits of Love or Hatred, our great and high Veneration, or pitiful and contemptible Thoughts and Apprehenſions for this or that Particular Way or Method, this or that Sort or Party of Men, is all Infuſed and Taught us: And had you been let alone, you had had no Hatred for *this*, or Love for *that* way; and therefore I Aſcribe almoſt all the Miſery wich you may have by your being Religious, to the Unhappineſs of your Reſpective Educations.

But your Parents muſt not be blamed for teaching you their Reſpective ways; and they had not ſhewed themſelves good Parents, and had betrayed a great deal of neglect, had they not Inſtructed you in the way which they thought would bring you to Salvation.

But they have done it, and you are ready to enter upon the Stage, Invested in the very *same* Circumstances, Instructed in the *same* Principles, and ready to act the *very same* part which they have done; and you will of necessity (as I said before) have the *same* Misery, which is Entailed upon you, unless you assist in getting the Entail to be cut off.

Now his Gracious Majesty, like a Loving Father, has entered a Caveat already, and is about to cut off the Grand Entail of Misery, which has so long Afflicted his People; and will Order things so, that your Respective Educations shall bring no hurt or damage to you; that you shall be of the Religion your Fathers or Principals have taught you; and have not the least Disturbance in that, or any other which you shall think most fit to bring you to Heaven; for Disturbance herein has been the principal cause of our Misery.

Your Fathers have been long in the Wilderness; but you are the Children of Promise, that must enter the Land of *Canaan*; you are in View of the Happy place already; your Fathers, some of them indeed, are in love with Garlick and Onyons, and despise the Heavenly Manna; they look back towards *Egypt*, and have been so long in Slavery, that they are almost in love with their Chains. This is of bad Consequence for *you*, and it concerns you to make an *Humble Filial Address* unto them, that they make no further delays, but that they would chearfully and readily, in compliance to His Majesties Desire, consent to have the Entail of Misery cut off; and that your being Heirs to their Lands and Estates, will signifie little, if they make you also Heirs to their Misery, which will destroy them, or hinder your peaceable Enjoyment of them: May be at last they may be Wise and Consider. If they will not,

Then you may expect what your Progenitors have had, nothing but Misery, Trouble and Confusion: You may expect Goals and Imprisonments, Fines and Banishment, to be driven from your Friends and Relations, from your Trades and Employments, from your Wives and Children, and Native Countrey; and must be put to *a miserable Choice*, To seek your Livelihoods in a *Forreign Countrey*, or be ruined in your *Own*: And lastly, You will most certainly be involved in all the Calamities, Plots, Treasons, Rebellions, &c. which men crossed and hindred in their ways to obtain Eternal Happiness, or shun Eternal Misery, can hatch or invent; and as you cannot avoid being Actors therein, so you will most certainly be Partakers of the Punishment due thereto. But if they will consent, and you wrestle so as to prevail, then you will have the Blessing; your Land will be as a Field which the Lord hath Blessed; you will have the Dew of Heaven, and the Fatness of the Earth; you will make your Island the Mistress of the Isles of the whole Earth; a Land Flowing with Milk and Honey; Riches and Honour will encompass you, Peace and Plenty will surround you; you will be Assistant to your Friends, a Terrour to your Enemies, and the Envy and Admiration of all about you.

Too long, too long, has the Noble and Brave Spirits of the *English* Youth been Oppressed and kept Under. Too long have they been shackled by Religious Mistakes and Superstitious Vanities! Methinks I see the Glorious Sun Arising o'er their Heads, which will Dispel all the Mists of Error, the Clouds of Oppression and Persecution, and will Clear all the Thick and dark Foggs, and let them see their way to Honour; that will raise their Blood, stir up their Courage, and let them be as much *English* as they please: *Ægypt*, and *Moab*, and *Ammon*, are afraid already; and if they be afraid *now*, when you but rouse your selves, and only in your Dawn, what will they do when they see you in your *Meridian*?

Was there but a *Great Charter setled*, this would Entitle you to all the above Happinesses; and you might be as Valiant, as Industrious, as Honest, as Good, as Religious as you please: You might sit under your own Vine, and own Fig-Tree, Eat your Bread, Enjoy your own, or your Ancestors Labour without Fear or Disturbance. But now you can do nothing, you are rather Passive then Active, and can only do what you are bid or Taught, your are held fast in a Ginn, and encompassed with Snares, and stand entituled to nothing but Misery, eternal Brawls and Wranglings. But who are your Enemies? Who are the Authors of so much Unhappiness? Surely not your Friends, your Relations, your Parents; they are Obliged in Duty and Conscience to do you all the good they can; Aye, but 't is they (O Unhappy Education!) which Involves not only themselves, but their Posterity in Misery. They are Obliged to do you good indeed: But alas! Mistaken men! They hinder you when they think they forward you; and really believe they are doing you *good*, when they are plunging you into all the *unhappiness* imaginable: But when men call Evil Good, there is no room left for Counsel and Advice, and therefore I know not what to say further: But shall Pray out the rest, and say, *O Lord, Almighty God, King of Heaven and Earth; Thou that hast turned the Heart of the King, turn also and move the Hearts of his People; Turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children; and the Childrens to their Fathers; Wean them from their Prejudices and Partialities; give them a right Understanding in all things; let Mutual Severities and Animosities cease, and Mutual Charity and Condescention more and more abound; Truly Instruct them all in the things that belong to their Peace both here and hereafter: And this I humbly beg for Jesus Christ his sake.*

FINIS.

WITH ALLOWANCE.

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